

good mores may be lost and evil ones produced. They require conventional control and good judgment to guide them. This requirement cannot be set aside. Amusements always present a necessity for moral education and moral will. This fact has impressed itself on men in all ages, and all religions have produced Puritan and ascetic sects who sought welfare, not in satisfying but in counteracting the desire for amusement and pleasure. Their efforts have proved that there is no solution in that direction. There must be an educated judgment at work all the time, and it must form correct judgments to be made real by a cultivated will, or the whole societal interest may be lost without the evil tendency being perceived.

671. Amusements do not satisfy the current notions of progress. It is clear from the history that amusements have gone through waves upward and downward, but that the amplitude of the waves is very small. It is true that the shows of the late Roman empire were very base, and that the great drama has gone very high by comparison, but the oscillation between the two entirely destroys anything like a steady advance in dramatic composition or dramatic art. This is a very instructive fact. It entirely negatives the current notion of progress as a sort of function of time which is to be expected to realize itself in a steady improvement and advance to better and better. The useful arts do show an advance. The fine arts do not. They return to the starting point, or near it, again and again. The dramatic art is partly literary and partly practical handicraft. Theater buildings improve; the machinery, lights, scenery, and manipulation improve. The literary products are like other artistic products:

they have periods of glory and periods of decay.
It is the
literary products which are nearest to the mores.
They lack all
progress, or advance only temporarily from worse
to better lit-
erary forms.